

Republican member of the House Committee on Armed Services; Dante B. Fascell and William S. Broomfield, chairman and rank-

ing Republican member of the House Committee on Foreign Relations.

Message to the Congress on Japanese Importation of Sea Turtles

May 17, 1991

To the Congress of the United States:

On March 20, 1991, Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan and Secretary of Commerce Robert Mosbacher certified under section 8 of the Fishermen's Protective Act of 1967, as amended (Pelly Amendment), 22 U.S.C. 1978(a)(2), that nationals of Japan have engaged in trade in sea turtles that threatens the survival of two endangered species and severely diminishes the effectiveness of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), an international conservation program.

The certification by the Secretaries of the Interior and Commerce was made because Japan has allowed its nationals to import large amounts of raw hawksbill sea turtle shell and olive ridley sea turtle skin. All sea turtles were recognized as endangered by CITES on July 1, 1975, and listed on Appendix I of that convention, which prohibits all international trade in the listed products. When Japan joined CITES in 1981, it reserved on hawksbill and olive ridley sea turtles and continued to trade in them.

Since the certification, my Administration has held discussions with the Government of Japan in an effort to end its trade in sea turtles. The Government of Japan has responded by ending its trade in olive ridley sea turtles and announcing publicly its intent to withdraw its reservations to CITES on olive ridleys. It has also announced publicly its commitment to end all trade in hawksbill sea turtles by a date certain and make a decision in the near future on the specific date for ending the trade and for lifting its reservation to CITES for this species. Given these commitments, I have decided not to recommend specific measures to prohibit wildlife imports at this time pending an assessment within 30 days of the adequacy of Japan's actions to lift its reservation and bring to a conclusive end its trade in hawksbill sea turtles. Based on that assessment, an additional report will be made to the Congress.

GEORGE BUSH

The White House,
May 17, 1991.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Situation in the Persian Gulf

May 17, 1991

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On March 19, 1991, I reported to you, consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution (Public Law 102-1), on the successful conduct of military operations aimed at the liberation of Kuwait. Since that time, the United Nations Security Council has adopted Resolution 687, which set forth the preconditions for a formal cease-fire. Iraq has

accepted those terms, and the cease-fire and withdrawal of coalition forces from southern Iraq have been concluded. The Iraqi repression of the Kurdish people has, however, necessitated a limited introduction of U.S. forces into northern Iraq for emergency relief purposes. I am reporting these matters to you as part of our continuing effort to keep the Congress fully informed on these developments.

Resolution 687 required, as a precondition for a formal cease-fire, that Iraq officially notify the United Nations of its acceptance of the provisions of the resolution. These provisions included: (1) respect for the international boundary as agreed between Iraq and Kuwait in 1963, which the Security Council guaranteed; (2) the creation of a demilitarized zone along the Iraq-Kuwait border and the deployment of a U.N. observer unit into that zone; (3) the destruction, removal, or rendering harmless of all chemical and biological weapons, ballistic missiles with a range greater than 150 kilometers, and nuclear-weapons-usable material, together with facilities related to them, and international supervision and inspection to verify compliance; (4) the creation of a fund, drawn from future Iraqi oil revenues, to pay compensation for losses caused by the Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait; (5) the continuation of the embargo of all exports of arms to Iraq; (6) the phased relaxation of certain other aspects of the U.N. sanctions against Iraq as Iraq complies with its obligations under the resolution; and (7) the renunciation by Iraq of support for international terrorism.

Iraq officially accepted those terms on April 6, and a formal cease-fire has gone into effect. Accordingly, United States Armed Forces deployed in southern Iraq began withdrawing as U.N. peacekeeping personnel deployed into the zone, and this withdrawal was completed on May 9. The United States has been assisting the U.N. Secretary General in his efforts to implement the other provisions of Resolution 687, particularly with respect to boundary demarcation, compensation, and weapons of mass destruction.

During this same period, however, Iraqi forces engaged in a campaign of brutal repression of internal opposition, with the result that many hundreds of thousands of civilians fled their homes in search of safety in the regions along the Turkish and Iranian borders. In response to this situation, on April 5 the Security Council adopted Resolution 688, which insisted that Iraq cease

its repression and allow immediate access by international humanitarian organizations, and appealed to all Member States to assist in these humanitarian relief efforts.

I immediately ordered United States Armed Forces to begin air-dropping large amounts of food and other essential items to these refugees. However, it soon became clear that even this massive effort would not be enough to deal with the desperate plight of the hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children stranded and suffering in these mountainous areas. Accordingly, on April 16 I directed United States Armed Forces to begin to establish immediately several temporary encampments in northern Iraq where geographical conditions would be more suitable for relief efforts. United States, British, and French forces are providing security for these encampments.

This effort is not intended as a permanent solution to the plight of the Iraqi Kurds. It is a humanitarian measure designed to save lives, consistent with Resolution 688. It is also not an attempt to intervene militarily into the internal affairs of Iraq or to impair its territorial integrity. We intend to turn over the administration and security for these temporary sites as soon as possible to the United Nations (a process that has already begun), and to complete our total withdrawal from Iraq. Our long-term objective remains the same: for Iraqi Kurds, and indeed for all Iraqi refugees and displaced persons, to return home and to live in peace, free from repression.

I am grateful for the support that the Congress has given, and I look forward to continued cooperation in meeting these urgent humanitarian goals.

Sincerely,

GEORGE BUSH

Note: Identical letters were sent to Thomas S. Foley, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Robert C. Byrd, President pro tempore of the Senate.